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ABSTRACT

This booklet discusses mainstream and special education interaction through the experiences and conclusions of a working group of persons with disabilities, parents, administrators, mainstream teachers, teachers in special education, therapists, and professionals in special needs from 10 European countries. It focuses upon the special needs education systems in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Holland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Part 1 presents fundamental principles for cooperation between special and mainstream education and essential elements for cooperation and transition to an open environment. Elements include the role of parents, the role of professionals, assessment, curriculum, classroom practice, technology, and financing. Part 2 provides brief outlines of special needs education systems in the 10 participating countries, including the country's legislation, facts and figures on children with special needs, overall organization, types of provision, and future actions. It then describes examples of good practice in the area of mainstream/special education. Contact information is provided for each program that is profiled as a good example of regular and special education cooperation. (CR)

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# Enhancing Co-operation between Mainstream and Special Education

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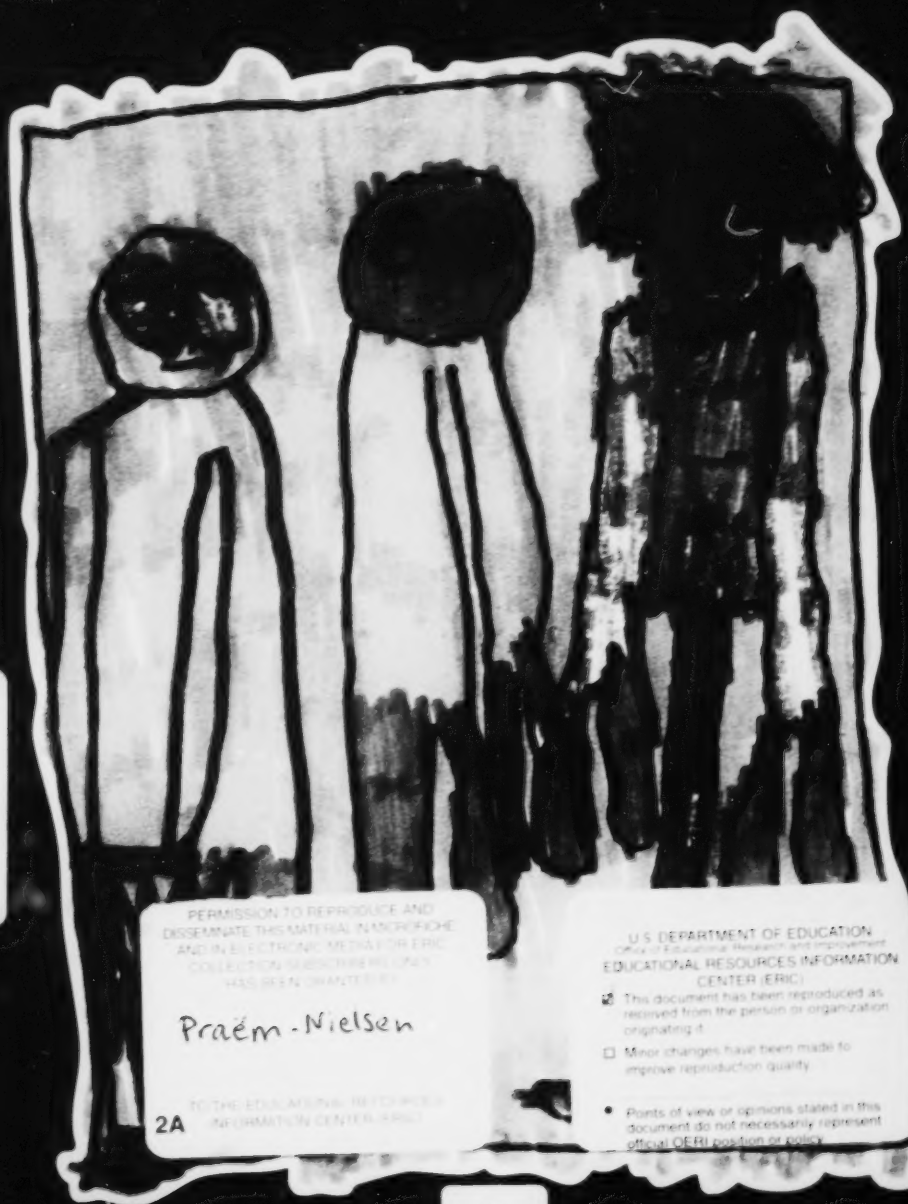

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Helios II Programme

# Enhancing Co-operation between Mainstream and Special Education

Thematic Group 9 · 1996

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*"Imagination is more important than knowledge"*

Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

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# Preface

Within the context of the HELIOS II programme, 1993-1996, the members of Thematic Group 9 which included persons with disabilities, parents, administrators, mainstream teachers, teachers in special education and therapists, professionals in special needs education from 10 different countries, have dealt with the theme of "mainstram/special education interaction".

The members of the group have worked within this context both as individual professionals and as representatives of their own local activities with a very positive and openminded attitude. We have had the opportunity to exchange experience, to discuss concepts, to evaluate their application to real and desirable situations and set out outlines about the interaction between mainstream and special educational provision.

In this booklet we present our work which evolved over the duration of 9 study visits over a 3 year period, listed below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **1994** | Kerteminde, DENMARK |
| | Vaucresson, FRANCE |
| | Morpeth, UNITED KINGDOM |
| **1995** | Den Haag, NETHERLANDS |
| | Oviedo, SPAIN |
| | Lisbon, PORTUGAL |
| **1996** | Dublin, IRELAND |
| | Lyon, FRANCE |
| | Hamburg, GERMANY |

In the first part we express our commonly held beliefs. We present our conclusions and what we consider to be the essential elements in the provision of mainstream/special education interaction.

## Preface

In the second part we present brief outlines of the special needs education systems operating in the countries of the members of Group 9. We present descriptions of the participating activities, as examples of good practice in the area of mainstream/special education.

This booklet is intended to mark a starting point in the process of co-operation, transition, integration and inclusion in mainstream/special education interaction. It may be considered as an invitation to participate in the development of inclusive education.

We wish it to be an inspiration for others who are dealing with the question of mainstream/special interaction.

# Fundamental Principles

When we talk about co-operation between special and mainstream education our first concern must be to establish communication between the different systems. Bridges must be put in place to overcome the barriers to integration. Our efforts must be based upon the confidence we place in the ability of all children to be successful. We must guard against isolating people through the social structures in which we operate. Our ambition is for all children to access appropriate educational provision in their local community. This will help the normal functioning of the community and support transition into adult life. Each national education system must be committed to the principle of inclusive education compatible with the child's needs. All decisions taken by the professionals and or the family of the young disabled person must aim to provide strong rich interactions which encourage the development of a necessary interdependence between the partners working with the child.

In our discussions we found that the term "integration" which is familiar to all participants implies change in a system or an individual's circumstances in the creation of a structure which includes people with disabilities. This appears to place a responsibility for change on the person being integrated. We believe that a more positive concept is required in order to achieve co-operation and transition in mainstream/special education interaction. Mainstream schools must include all children in their thinking when making educational provision. The term "inclusion" implies a positive process of building systems which from the beginning include all members of society and, therefore, no individual is perceived as "segregated". Our group uses the term inclusion as a positive description of what is meant by the term integration. Our vision is the creation of a positive educational environment for all children.

Within the context of our working theme which focused on mainstream/special education interaction, we have set about identifying a number of fundamental

principles which may be employed in the development of co-operation in the transition to an open educational environment. This implies that there must always be a readiness in special education to reintegrate children with special needs into mainstream schools.

There should be co-operation between special and mainstream education, which is of benefit to the pupils of both systems. Through co-operation one gradually learns to understand and appreciate what living with disabilities entails and vice versa. In this interdependent world the disabled child can evolve towards equal partnership. Co-operation will lead to an acceptance and acknowledgement of the individual abilities of children with special needs. It will be promoted through reflection by teachers on the capacities of the disabled students.

A fundamental principle held by Group 9 is that all children have a right of access to learning opportunities within the National education system. Provision must be made to accomodate these opportunities. Education should be child centred. The educational process must adapt through a child centred approach to the needs of the child rather than that the child be required to adapt to the educational process.

Children must have a right of access to mainsteam education as far as this is possible. Any child may at sometime have special educational needs. In the eyes of the child there are no limits to integration. The child sees the opportunity of participating as unlimited, but limitations may arise with the interaction of the child and the environment. These limitations may be overcome through the sharing of expertise and the provision of resources.

When a child begins schooling the focus of expertise lies with the school which co-ordinates the educational development, in consultation with the parents, calling upon the professional network when and where the need arises. As an effect of this development of real partnership, both sides can enter into a social process based on acceptance of each other which finally will lead to positive changes for all those engaged in the educational process.

Acceptance and acknowledgement of speical needs students should be accentuated in a positive way, thereby empowering them and those with whom they live. It is our belief that mainstream education enlarges the educational opportunities for people

with special needs when those needs are adequately provided for. The children in mainstream education can also benefit through the expansion of provision for all children in their system.

The decision to include children in mainstream education must also be based on the provision and maintenance of educational quality and not only on purely ideological grounds. Disabilities should challenge mainstream schools to develop Individualized Educational Routes (I.E.R. as outlined under "curriculum"), while maintaining the quality of educational provision. The I.E.R. should be evaluated at least once a year and include a statement on the perceived future development of the student.

Schools have an important role in educating children with special needs to assist them to live independent autonomous lives whenever possible. Integration in education is more than just "fitting in", it means respecting the differences and not only providing social acceptance but also the maximum development of individual potential. Integration is more likely to succeed in a mixed ability setting due to the natural acceptance of differences in the student population. This will create a school ethos which will nurture co-operation and inclusion.

Schools should strive to accomodate all children including the disabled, gifted and ethnic cultural minorities. Educating all students together may lead to an increase in natural empathy, acceptance and inclusion for all. All integration procedures should be clearly documented to define the actions, roles, and missions of the participants. Each partner should be a signatory to such documentation.

To enhance co-operation between special and mainstream education we need a well defined framework. This should be a flexible structure which allows for adaptation and change. A more flexible approach will be achieved when all involved with the child are interdependent and multi-supportive. The pursuit of a perfect framework should not delay its establishment. Learning-by-doing is a valid approach to the establishment of this structure.

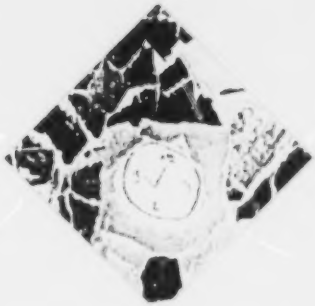
Disabled people must be listened to in a genuine dialogue if we are to have consensus on effective systems. They must be partners in the dialogue and also part

of the decision making process at all times. Parents should be free to exercise their choice of school for their child.

Educational integration is an ongoing process promoted through conviction, adaptation, inclusion, co-operation, professional training, and awareness raising for parents and the public at large. It can be achieved through the promotion of good practice. A positive approach will direct the energies of those providing special services to focus on what the children can achieve, rather than over-emphasizing their disabilities. Integration will result in a fair and inclusive society for all. The whole of society is responsible for the evolution of integration, not just on an ideological basis but firmly grounded in the desire to provide quality education for all.

We see our work as a powerful instrument for change. If we succeed in our objective of enhancing co-operation between special and mainstream education it could have enormous implications on how society will evolve. The whole of society is responsible for the evolution of integration, which will result in a more equal and inclusive society. For disabled people and their families it will lead to increased social acceptance, the maximum development of personal potential, which will help normal functioning in the community and support transition into adult life. This will lead to the development of a more positive society with equal rights and opportunities for all.

# Essential Elements



Co-operation and transition to an open environment (mainstream/special interaction) can be facilitated through the use of a structure which brings together essential elements, such as the role of parents, the role of professionals, assessment, curriculum; classroom practice, technology and financing.

## Dialogue Structures

Dialogue Structure" (D.S.) is a term we have chosen to describe any structure which facilitates co-operation between mainstream and special education. It is an important prerequisite to the opening of mainstream schools to children with special needs. The use of the dialogue structure is essential when responding to the special educational needs of individual students. It is an instrument to be used in the development of good practice. Dialogue Structures might service the needs of pupils in different systems such as mainstream and special, or both together. This implies that both mainstream and special education will continue to co-exist.

The Dialogue Structure can be the co-ordinating centre for facilitating co-operation between special and mainstream schools within a particular area. It can provide advice to teachers in mainstream and or special schools and lead to the promotion of professional skills. This in turn may lead to the production of new educational materials and resources in consultation with the classroom teacher. The Dialogue Structure can be a resource centre for the use of technology, team teaching and collegiate consultancy.

## The Role of Parents

Parents, as the most interested people regarding the complete development of their children, are key partners in education. They must be able to play a more significant role in decision making, especially in relation to placement options available to their child. They should be involved as partners in the Dialogue Structure.

Cultural differences need to be considered as an important factor in the way parents involve themselves. They have their own ambitions for their child and should therefore be part of the decision making process at all times. They are partners in the working out of the individualized curriculum.

The agreed aims of the individualized curriculum should be reinforced at home by the parents and appropriate training should be available to assist them in this role. A support structure and training should be in place for parents throughout the educational development of the child and in particular at points of transition in their child's life, such as when schooling begins, adolescence and adulthood. They could benefit from participation in a "Parental Network".

Once the child begins the schooling period the professionals should be available to advise the parents on appropriate goals to be set regarding their children. They should foster co-operation in the carrying out of specific actions at home and in the school. Parents should be free to exercise their own choice of school for their child.

## Role of Professionals

Group 9 agrees that the existence of a "Professional Network" is essential for the maintenance and development of specialised expertise in a productive mainstream/special education interaction. This network will involve the expertise required to provide the optimal service with quality for children with special educational needs.

As soon as the child's needs are identified "early intervention" begins with the building of a team composed of experts drawn from the health, social and educational fields, which will assist the family throughout the development of their child. A child centred approach will determine what expertise is required in a professional network.

This network could include teachers of the local mainstream schools, the psychologists and other professionals of the mainstream educational-psychological counselling and support services, teachers from special schools, psychologists from specialised educational-psychological counselling and support services, along with professionals from social, health and other relevant agencies. Close co-operation with parents is also essential.

The professional network should be used to help the child and the family, so as to allow the maximum development of the child as far as possible in the local community. The necessary expertise should be available when and where required by the needs of the individual child.

The disposition of the professional network should be characterized by the quality of "open mindedness" which invites continuous feedback and improvement in their professional practice. It will be particularly involved at times of transition, such as, home to school, a change of school levels, school to adult life, etc. It is the responsibility of the professional network to ensure that an Individual Educational Route (I.E.R) accompanies the child throughout its development.

## Assessment

All schools, whether mainstream or special, primary or post-primary should have a clear written policy and procedure for the identification and assessment of pupils with special needs, including those with disabilities. In the first instance it is important to correctly identify the presence of special educational needs. It is necessary to clearly state the reason why certain decisions are taken and others disregarded, to be precise at the time of communication to others about the criteria which will guide the action and about the necessary conditions under which the action will take place.



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**Essential Elements**

Assessment should be inter-disciplinary (drawing upon relevant expertise from parents, teachers and other professionals, such as psychologists, pedagogical, social, ets.) This is possible where assessment can be based on the expertise of everybody involved and not only on the individual teachers, the individual psychologist, or the individual support service. Appropriate assessment should reduce the damage caused by rigid categorization which can be educationally unsound and lead to the hiding of differences which ultimately could lead to inappropriate educational provision.

## Curriculum

The educational system (national, regional, local) should allow flexibility in adapting the curriculum to the special educational needs of the individual child. The flexible use of different curricula should be the standard and there should be emphasis on permeability between the levels. We use the term "Individual Educational Route" (I.E.R.) as a common denominator, embracing such concepts as curriculum differentiation, adaptation and individualizations as well as differentiated or individualized instruction.

The I.E.R. should be based on the mainstream curriculum and be developed as an individualization of the same curriculum to reach the individual child. The child's wishes should be taken into account when decisions on these individual education plans are taken. Developing a procedure for the establishment of a "pupil monitoring system" for the registration of the pupil's progress is both desirable and necessary.

## Classroom Practice

Classroom practice is the educational reality of the schools. It is necessary to have a support system for this practice to be effective with those children who have special educational needs. The first responsibility of every teacher is to consider the needs of each pupil. The three basic principles relating to the curriculum

(child centred, flexible and differentiated) will affect everything which happens in the classroom.

There should be variety of learning and teaching methods in all the individual educational routes. It is important for teachers to work more collaboratively with their colleagues. There should be a development of team teaching.

Teachers in the classroom need a supporting system if they are to be effective with the children who have special educational needs. Those teachers who are involved in the supporting structure should have a specific qualification and experience in the area of special education. There should be on-going whole staff development with specialised training to ensure quality and expertise.

The role of the supporting teacher should be clearly defined in the school. In the mainstream school a professional should be identified for the co-ordination of provision for students with special needs in consultation with teachers, the Dialogue Structure and the Professional Network.

## Technology

Technology should be viewed as an aid and not as and end in itself. It can help an individul to overcome a deficiency, to maximize learning and to achieve the highest level of independence. Technological development can be a means of providing quality of access for all students. The quality of life will improve through assisting communication in social, educational, vocational and family settings. Effective technology will be attractive, socially acceptable, user friendly, ergonimically designed, affordable and durable. Technology should be seen as a support to the educational process and an enhancement to interaction.

Often the newest and most sophisticated technology, as well as the most up-to-date knowledge on the application of technology in the field of special needs education exists within special education. Technological expertise also exists in mainstream schools. There are therefore many advantages to encouraging a liaison and sharing of such expertise through a dialogue between special and mainstream systems.

**Essential Elements**

Co-operation between local, regional and central services will offer advantages in the areas of finance, research, evaluation and the sharing of experience and information. The extension of this co-operation to firms and universities is recommended. Such co-operation will ensure that appropriate technology is available and responsive to the needs of the individual. The international information networks and data bases are valuable resources in providing current information on technology. It should be the duty of central services to provide these resources.

The Professional Network must offer advice on the selection of technology to be used by the individual. Training in the use of technology is essential for those who are involved with the child. It is best provided for by those who have instrumental and educational expertise. A Dialogue Structure can be an effective way of implementing good practice in the area of technology.

## Financing

When pursuing enhanced interaction between special and mainstream education it will be expedient for the process that the financial resources follow the child. This will facilitate a wider choice of school provision enabling the availability of expertise and support wherever needed. Allocation of finance to mainstream schools should be increased in recognition of the inclusion of students with special needs. Children with disabilities should have a higher financial support within the education system.

Co-operation is necessary between local, regional and central agencies in order to offer optimum utilisation of finance. A lack of finance does not have to be an obstacle to integration. Individual rights should not be denied because of perceived shortages of finance. Money should be provided where support to the mainstream system is concerned.

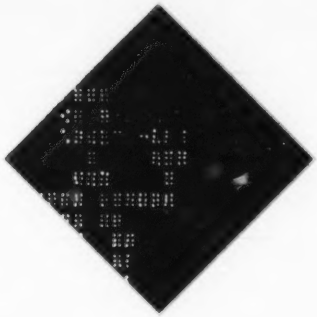
The development of Dialogue Structures may be initially more expensive than previous systems, as promoting change will inevitably lead to higher costs when both the new and existing systems co-exist in the transitionary period. In the long

term the costs could be neutral, as effectiveness and efficiency improve. It is also possible that the very high costs of problem solving educational systems which employ increasing numbers of professionals would be greatly reduced through timely cost-effective intervention.

• • •

Group 9 in considering the above mentioned essential elements agree that Dialogue Structures are one of the catalysts for change and for awareness raising. They can be an important means to enhancing integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools. They can help to maintain and develop special expertise and make this expertise available in mainstream education, in order to enhance the possibility of inclusive education and to improve the quality of special needs education. Initial teacher training, which all teachers receive, should place more emphasis on special needs education. This would lead to an increased awareness and an ability to identify children with special needs. There should be on-going whole staff development with specialised training to ensure quality and expertise. Training should also be provided for non-teaching staff such as classroom assistants. Dialogue Structures can facilitate the development of inter-disciplinary teams and help to include the views of all the professionals, the parents and the child, in the decision making process. They can be instrumental in assessment with responsibility for identifying, diagnosing and developing individual adapted programmes on an inter-disciplinary basis.

# Concluding Remarks



It is our experience from working together in Group 9 that great apprehension exists as to what changes will come about as a result of increased co-operation between mainstream and special education. This co-operation will not occur without the goodwill of all the people who are central to the life of the child. Students, parents and teachers are nervous that change will reduce the quality of provision. However, it is our experience that the existence of a flexible framework for enhanced co-operation will be of tremendeous benefit to anyone involved in special needs education.

We present in the second part of this booklet examples of how national projects have improved educational provision through enhanced special/mainstream interaction and the establishment of different types of Dialogue Structures which:

- break down the barriers to release the potential which exists in both systems;
- provide a framework for development in speical needs education;
- facilitate the involvement of everybody with a part to play;
- enable the establishment of Individual Educational Routes which meet the needs of the individual children.

Socio-economic developments within the European Union challenge systems to acquire new approaches in education. Legislation alone will not lead to inclusion yet it is an essential element in ensuring the rights of people with disabilities. The quality of educational provision must not be diluted in the provision of integrated education.

We believe that the educational process must adapt, through a "child centred" approach, to the needs of the child rather than the child to the process. The organisation should be very flexible, so that the child centred approach and those procedures developed in the work with the children who have special needs, will have added value when applied to mainstream education.

*"Give me the first six years of my life,*
*and*
*you can keep the rest"*

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

# Brief Outlines of Special Needs Education Systems in the 10 Participating Countries

# Austria

## Special Educational Needs within the Austrian System

Special education in Austria has become increasingly specialised since 1945 with Algeimeine Sonderscule (ASO) - common special schools - for children with learning handicaps, for behaviourally or emotionally disturbed children and schools for different types of handicaps as physically, visually, hearing-impaired children or children with severe and multiple handicaps.
Meanwhile, by the early eighties, an increasing number of parents wanted their children with special needs to be educated in mainstream schools.
There is not a single compulsory school for children between 6 and 14 . As parents prefer to send their children to Gymnasium, Hauptschule - Junior High schools - have to deal with a high percentage of "children at risk".

## Legislation

The first steps in inclusive education in Austria took place as early as 1984/85. The first inclusive classes were opened as a result of parents and teachers' local initiatives. From 1988 to 1993 inclusive education of children with special needs could only exist in pilot classes besides the system of special education.
As a result of the parents' campaigns, the Parliament passed an amendment of the school-organisation-act on inclusive education in 1993. Now parents of children with special needs can choose whether their child is educated in a special or in a mainstream elementary school in their neighbourhood. But the local school board may oppose their choice.

## Facts and Figures

Despite the considerable increase of inclusive classes in the last 15 years, only a few special students join inclusive classes in mainstream schools.

In Austria in 1994/95

- number of mainstream students .....838.529
- number of special needs students ..... 18.559 (2.17%)
- number of special needs students
  in common special schools ..... 11.423
  in other types of special schools ..... 7.136
  in inclusive classes ..... 2.018 (10.9% of the number of special needs students)

The proportion of special needs children integrated in mainstream schools differs to some extent according to the inclusive awareness in the federal states.

## Overall Organisation

The Ministry of Education - not the Bundersländer - is responsibile for the Legislation in educational affairs in Austria. As school laws have the status of constitutional laws (there is a needed 2/3-majority to change them), it is not easy to innovate. Special education provision is a special department of the governmental, federal and local school boards.

## Different types of Provision in mainstream education

- "Inclusive Classes" of about 20 children with 4 special needs children, two teachers of both mainstream and special school; teaching is based on the principles of individualization, cooperation and active learning. Social learning must be actively encouraged. Emphasis should also be on individual learning programmes.

- "Cooperative Classes" in which a mainstream and a special school are cooperating, while following their own curricula; the level of cooperation is determined by the teachers involved. Children are usually segregated for the main subjects but this may not prevent social integration. This model is

favoured by education authorities because it doesn´t call for any change in the Austrian school system.

- "Small classes" of 6 to 11 students with learning difficulties within mainstream schools. It is not a good model for social integration as these classes are segregated within the mainstream school.

- "Support teacher Model" for classes with fewer than 4 children. Support teachers are available for 4-6 hours a week for each child. It´s the model used in small, rural schools.

According to a 1991 assessment, the most effective model is the integrated one, followed by the support teacher model, the least successful approach being the cooperative class.

## The Future

As more and more parents send their children to inclusive classes, the risk of an increasing gap between quantity and quality of inclusive education is growing. As there is no interaction until now between the increase of special needs children in mainstream education and the decrease of children in special education, costs are increasing as a result of a higher demand in special needs than before the law amendment. In 1997 the first children of regular inclusive mainstream classes will leave the elementary school level and the scope of inclusive legislation must be extended to secondary school level. There is also a great demand for models of inclusive vocational education and training.

# Belgium

## Special Educational Needs within the Belgian system

Education in Belgium is a constitutional right for children, from the age of 6 up to 18 years education is compulsory.
Education is organised on different levels and in different forms:

1. Mainstream primary education: in infant and basic schools (age 3 - 12).
2. Special primary education: in special infant and basic schools and in medical-pedagogical institutes (age 3-15).
3. Mainstream secondary education (age 12-18).
4. Special secondary education (age 12-21).
5. University and non-universitary higher education.

## Legislation

The Basic Act of May 29, 1959, sets out the principles for the organization of teaching institutions.

In the Education Act of July 6, 1970, the right to special education and integrated education is entitled.

The Decree of June 28, 1978, describes the different types and forms of special educational provision.

The special Decree of December 19, 1988, sets out the principles for the establishment of the ARGO, the "Autonome Raad van het Gemeenschapsonderwijs" which organizes the Education of the Flemish Community.

## Belgium

### Facts and Figures

Number of children in Flanders in September 1995:

- in primary and secondary schools:.....1,096,742

- in mainstream infant schools: ..... 226,716
- in special infant schools: ..... 1,706 (0.74%)

- in mainstream primary schools: ..... 393,587
- in special primary schools: ..... 21,654 (5.21%)

- in mainstream secondary schools: ..... 437,894
- in special secondary schools: ..... 15,385 (3.39%
- in integrated secondary education: ..... 261 (0.05%)

### Overall Organisation

Different authorities have a certain autonomy to organize education within a central regulation from the Department of Education. They are subsidized by the Flemish Government.

### Different Types of Provision

In Belgium, there are different types of special education:

- type 1: for children with mild mental handicaps.
- type 2: for children with moderate/severe mental handicaps.
- type 3: for children with behavioural and/or characterial disorders.
- type 4: for children with physical handicaps.
- type 5: for children with long-term diseases.
- type 6: for blind/visually impaired children.
- type 7: for deaf/hearing impaired children.
- type 8: for children with learning disturbances.

On the secondary level, special education is organised in different "forms":

- 1. social training (for types 2, 3, 4, 6 or 7).
- 2. social and professional training (for types 2, 3, 4, 6, or 7).
- 3. vocational education (for types 1, 3, 4, 6 or 7).
- 4. continued education (for types 4, 5, 6 or 7).

Type 8 of special education is organised in special primary schools only. They are trained to re-integrate in the mainstream system, at least at the point of transition to the secondary level.

Integrated education by means of a supporting teacher or therapist, assisting in a mainstream school, is possible for types 4, 6 or 7 of special education.

A multidisciplinary team of medical, psychological and social advisers decides whether a child is admitted to a special school or not. The PMS-team is responsible for the statement for admission, indicating the type of special education and describing the childs's pedagogical needs. The statement is based on the intellectual and intelligential development, the technical adroit, the social ability and the emotional stability of the child. Parents are responsible for the application.

## The Future

Future developments will focus on:

- early care in mainstream education in order to avoid transition to a special school,
- integrated education by means of additional support from special education in mainstream,
- special educational needs services after re-integration in mainstream schools.

# Denmark

## Special Educational Needs within the Danish System

In Denmark all children, regardless of handicap and disability, however severe, are educated in the same school, the Folkskole, at primary and lower secondary level. There are no children outside the mainstream educational system.

## Legislation

The Act which governs the Folkeskole, Danish Primary and Lower Secondary Schools, encompasses all school age children (6-16 years).

In 1994, a Consolidation Act was passed making differentiated education a main principle. This means that each student, with or without special educational needs, is entitled to an individual curriculum which enables him or her to learn to his or her maximum potential.

## Facts and Figures

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • number of children in mainstream schools | 660,000 | |
| • number of children with special needs | 80,000 | 12% of the school population |
| - in the ordinary classroom | 70,000 | |
| - in special needs classes | 6,000 | |
| - in special schools | 4,000 | 0.5% |

Of the approx. 80,000 children (12% of the total school population) referred annually to special needs education, some 70,000 receive the special support as a relatively limited supplement to the instruction in the ordinary class. Roughly 6,000

attend special needs classes in ordinary mainstream schools, and about 4,000 are enrolled in special schools. Thus, only 0.5% of all pupils are in special schools.

## Overall Organisation

The state (the Ministry of Education) is responsible for legislation.

Regional authorities (Counties) are responsible for the education of children with severe and profound learning disabilities (1%) in special needs classes, special centres or special schools.

The local authorities (Municipalities) are responsible for the education of children with moderate learning disabilities (11.5%) along with the rest of the children in the mainstream schools.

## Types of Provision

All reference to special needs education are made by the local Educational-Psychological Counselling and Support Services.

Reassessment takes place at least once a year. Parents are involved in deciding whether their child should attend a mainstream school, a special class, or a special school, as well as how this can be best achieved. Exceptional conditions must exist before school authorities can go against the parents' wishes.

## The Future

Following the 1994 Consolidation Act, the Ministry of Education has now launched a massive in-service teacher training programme focusing specifically on differentiated teaching, including such aspects as mutual teacher supervision and support, and the application of information technology.

# France

## Special Educational Needs within the French system

Besides the mainstream public system, children with special needs are educated in four different systems: the National Education system, special needs schools supervised by the National Education, public or private organisations for children with severe social problems under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and schools for children on probation or in hospitals (teachers being provided by the Ministry of Education).

## Legislation

Several acts provide regulations for the education of children with special needs including all handicaps and disabilities. The most important one was passed on July 30, 1975. It was followed by the Act of July 10, 1989 concerning all children and by the Act of October 27, 1989 concerning the children who are not under the responsability of the Ministry of Education. All three Acts stipulate that the State is responsible for special provision for all children with disabilities whatever they are and however severe they may be. The 1994 circulaire on integration works on the basic principle of integration.

This legislation has resulted in the creation of the Commission déparmentale de l'éducation spéciale (CDES), and two sub-committees, one for secondary schools, the Commission de circonscription du Second degré and one for elementary schools, the Commission de circonscription élémentaire et preélémentaire, which provide a dialogue structure.

## Facts and Figures

In France in 1996

- Number of children in mainstream primary schools .....6,884,000
- Number of children in special schools .....66,000

- Number of children in mainstream secondary schools.....5,822,000
- Number of children in special schools .....126,000

## Overall Organisation

The State (the Ministry of Education) is responsible for legislation. The Régions (the regional authorities), the départements (the counties), the communes (the local authorities) are responsible for funding schools. Most teachers are appointed by the Ministry of Education in specific schools.
Children with disabilities are assessed at département level by the CDES that decides what is the best school for the child. His / her parents may accept or reject that decision. The committee's decision entitles them to ask the Sécurité sociale to pay for their child's medical support and the département for his/her transportation. Once the parents have accepted the Committee's decision, the child is assigned to a school and the school has to comply with the decision.

## Different Types of provision

- Children attend mainstream schools when they need very little support and when they can receive medical assistance outside school.
- Others are enrolled in special classes in mainstream schools or in classes where they get part-time teaching, i.e. they are integrated in mainstream classes for some subjects and in the school life. This concerns only 7.2% of the students with a disability.
- Special classes within comprehensive schools provide vocational training as well as general teaching.
- Children with special medical problems, with severe learning disabilities and mentally impaired children attend special schools

- Special schools are also provided for children suffering from physical disabilities, sight or hearing impairment or even learning disabilities;
- Many private institutions try to cope with the children who are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs or Justice and cannot adjust in state schools.
- The children who are under treatment in hospitals are also taught.

Integration has become a basic principle which can be achieved very flexibly in many different ways by local teams. There exist four types types of integration:

- an individual child can be integrated in a mainstream school with additional support;
- there may be special classes within a mainstream school;
- a child can attend both mainstream and special school;
- there may be an interaction between mainstream and special school.

Provision varies from region to region. This diversity also dates back to strategies used at various stages in the history of interaction between mainstream and special school.

## The Future

Teacher training has to be further developed and more flexible provision should be provided. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs could provide each student with a disability with a tierce personne (an attendant) and the local community could provide all schools with a health care service. Awareness has to be developed through information and training.

# Germany

## Special Educational Needs within the German System

In Germany, special needs education has developed apart from mainstream education. A differentiated system of well-equipped special schools taking into account the specific educational needs of children was set up between 1960-1970. Previously these children were placed in general schools without special support or were deprived of schooling. It was agreed that children with identified special needs should attend a special school.

The idea of inclusive education instead of separate education arose in the eighties when parents' initiatives called for integration classes in Elementary schools in several German states or Länder and succeeded in getting them introduced. Meanwhile the positive experience made in these experimental classes as well as with other forms of integrative and cooperative practice has led to an increasing amount of integrative education on all levels of education.

## Legislation

However, legislation and school development differ among the Länder, since the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany allows different educational laws and policies. The Ministers of Education of the 16 Länder continuously try to reach agreement on basic principles to organize the educational system. In 1994, they agreed upon the recommendation that special needs education should be understood as part of the mission devolved on mainstream education. Nevertheless, there are fundamental differences in federal practice. In some of the Länder, the policy of separate education for children with special needs is still mostly maintained. In others, school experiments with different forms of cooperation and integration have been set up and continuously developed. In new educational laws some Länder have even stated that parents should have the choice

for their children either to attend special schools or to get adequate support in mainstream schools. However, these laws are limited by financial restrictions.

## Facts and Figures

Numbers of Students in Germany, 1995:

| | |
|---|---|
| preschool level (age 5/6) | 84,024 |
| primary school (grades 1-4) | 3,684,125 |
| secondary level I (grades 5-10) | 5,066,416 |
| secondary level II | 3,145,983 |
| general education, grades 11-13 | 705,981 |
| vocational training schools | 2,440,002 |
| special schools | 390,444 |
| - for learning disabilities | 220,728 |
| - for other disabilities | 169,716 |

Over the years, altogether about 4-5% of all children are identified as having special educational needs.

Students in special schools in Germany in 1994:
(percentages of total numbers of students in grade 1-10)

| | |
|---|---|
| altogether | 4.262% |
| learning disabilities | 2.427% |
| mental disabilities | 0.602% |
| language disorders | 0.348% |
| physical handicaps | 0.216% |
| behaviour problems | 0.230% |
| hearing impairments | 0.111% |
| visual impairments | 0.045% |

The proportion of children with special needs, who are integrated in regular schools, with the help of special support, varies according to the regional and federal conditions. From Berlin it was lately reported that about 50 % are integrated in elementary schools; but in most of the other Länder the proportion is much smaller.

## Different Types of Provision

As there exists no overall organisation in Germany, provision depends on specific local and regional conditions. It may greatly vary;

- the child is transferred to one of the special schools;
- some kind of cooperation takes place between mainstream and special classes.
- special classes are provided within a regular school;
- regular schools integrate individual children in the context of their normal curriculum; preventive or additional support help the child to cope with the regular learning conditions;
- regular schools develop teaching strategies taking into account individualized curricula and cooperation with support teachers; even individual children suffering from severe learning problems can be integrated in these schools;
- inclusive education for several children with different special needs is organized in Integrationklassen - integration classes - within the framework of continuous team-teaching and individualized curricula.

## The Future

On the basis of present experience, it is now widely acknowledged that inclusive practice should be increased, according to parental requirements, while special schools or special needs centres should be maintained as well.

# Ireland

## Special Educational needs within the Irish System

Special education in Ireland has been provided for through the National Primary school system. The special schools work within the Primary School curriculum through adapting it to meet their needs. The majority of the students requiring special assistance receive it in the mainstream system.

## Legislation

Following discussion between the partners in education the Ministry of Education published a "Green" and more recently a "White Paper" on legislative proposals in education. There is no education legislation in Ireland at present.

## Facts and Figures

There are approximately 1 million people in full time education in Ireland.

15% - 20% of this population are in need of some special assistance. These persons are educated in the National Curriculum, within Mainstream Schools.

Approximately 2% of all those in full time education have significant disabilities. 0.9% of such students are in Special Schools mainly within the National Primary School System, where students may attend up to 18 years of age.

## Overall Organisation

There is one Ministry for Education in Ireland. Compulsory education goes from 6 to 15 years of age.

There are two sectors in the education system: Primary National School (ages 6 to 12) and Secondary Level School (Post Primary, for ages 12 to 18).
Second Level education is provided for in Voluntary Secondary (65%),Vocational (22%), Comprehensive (3%) and Community Schools or Colleges (10%).

## Different Types of Provision

There is little or no provision for students with significant disabilities in Second Level Schools.

- Voluntary Secondary Schools place emphasis on academic achievement. They are private institutions which are mainly funded by the State.
- Vocational schools place emphasis on practical and vocational subjects. They are under the management of a Vocational Education Committee (V.E.C). There are 38 such committees in Ireland.
- Comprehensive schools were established as a bridge between the traditional Secondary and Vocational Sector at Post Primary.
- Community Schools or Colleges with emphasis on community inclusion are now the preferred approach of the State to providing education as a community resource.

The National Second Level Curriculum is completed in two cycles. The Junior Certificate State Examination is taken on completion of the Junior Cycle following the first 3 years in Post Primary. The Leaving Certificate State Examination may be taken 2 or 3 years following the Junior Certificate to complete the Senior Cycle. The Senior Certificate is used as a means of entry to Third Level education.

## The Future

The Government White Paper "Charting Our Education Future" proposes the establishment of Education Boards throughout the country. The educational principles enshrined in this document are pluralism, equality, partnership and accountability. Parents will have statutory rights with access to school records.
School Plans inclusive of a policy on assessment, will be prepared by each school. The needs of children with disabilities will receive special attention. The objective will be to ensure that provision for such children is sufficiently flexible to meet their special needs.

# The Netherlands

## Special Educational Needs within the Dutch System

The Dutch education system consists of six different sectors:
1. Primary education (for children between 4 and 12).
2. Basic education in Secondary education (between 12 and 15).
3. Secondary education (between 15 and 19).
4. Higher education for students (18 and over)
5. Adult education.
6. Schools for special education.

The Netherlands provide a system of primary and secondary special education for children with psychological, sensory or physical difficulties: special primary schools for children between three and twelve and special secondary schools for students between thirteen and twenty.
This type of education is aimed at children who need more educational help than ordinary primary or secondary schools can provide.

## Legislation

The Nursery Education Act of 1955 and the Primary Education Act of 1920 were replaced by a new Primary Education Act (WBO) which came into force in 1985.

The secondary Education Act (WVO) has been in operation since 1968.

Higher education includes higher vocational education and the universities. The Open University has been ruled by the Higher Education and Research Act since 1993.

Special Education is ruled by the Special Education Interim Act (ISOVSO) which came into force on August 1, 1985.

## Facts and Figures

- number of children in mainstream primay schools: ..... about 1,5 million
- number of children in mainstream secondary education: ..... about 700,000

- number of children in special schools: ..... more than 100,000
- number of boys: ..... 80%
- number of girls: ..... 20%

- number of children in public schools: ..... 27%
- number of children in private schools: ..... 73%

Special education is provided in separate schools.

## Overall Organisation

Education is a national responsibility. The Ministry of Education is based in the city of Zoetermeer, all the rules and directions come from "Zoetermeer".

## Different Types of Provision

Special schools take care of children who require more educational help than ordinary primary and secondary schools can provide. In order to give these children the education best suited to their needs there exists a variety of special primary and secondary schools.
Special education includes schools for:

a. Deaf children;
b. Hearing-impaired children;
c. Children with severe speech difficulties;
d. Blind/ sight-impaired children;
e. Physically handicapped children;
f. Multihandicapped children;
g. Children in hospitals;
h. Children with long-term illnesses;

i. Children in schools attached to paedological institutes;
j. Children with moderate learning difficulties;
k. Children with severe learning difficulties;
l. Children with severe behavioural difficulties;
m. Children with learning and behavioural difficulties;
n. Preschool children with developmental difficulties;

Application for admission of a child must be submitted by the parents. Intermediaries are often involved, such as a school advisory service, a school or a doctor, but the child's parents are responsible for the application itself. Admission does not necessarily follow application automatically: this is decided by the school board after consulting a committee of experts.
For most of the primary schools the Toelatings Commissie (Regional Board) decides whether a child is admissible or not.
Placement in a mainstream school with additional supervision by a special need teacher can also be a solution.

## The Future

A project entitled Weer Samen Naar School (Going to School Together Again) concerning primary mainstream and primary special education has been recently launched. It aims at keeping within the mainstream system children who would otherwise be transferred to special schools. Partnerships have been set up between special and mainstream schools with the aim of equipping the latter so that they could provide tailor-made facilities to children with special educational needs.
This project involves only schools for children with learning and behavioural difficulties, children with moderate learning difficulties and preschool children with developmental difficulties. Its purpose is to reduce the 3.8% of the children in these three special schools to 2%.
This integrational philosophy does not apply to other special school types. Individual school sometimes integrate children with a down-syndrom or another handicap. A debate has been recently launched in the Netherlands about granting parents funds to enable them to choose a school for their child and pay for his/her education at that school (back pack model). For primary education it has been enacted.

Partnerships have been set up for co-operation between secondary mainstream and special education. The "risk-group" in these two types of education is about 15%. The partnerships work on reaching a Leerweg ondersteund onderwijs (Helping structure) and on an employment training called De Praktijkschool. When this goal is reached, all the students leave school with a beginner's qualification.

# Portugal

## Special Educational Needs within the Portuguese System

In Portugal, *Educação Básica* - basic education - 9 years - is compulsory for all children. Children with any kind of handicaps, however serious, are educated in their local school since they have the same rights and opportunities as any other child to attend ordinary classes in accordance with a unique law. Special education is, therefore, integrated in the national educational system.
Children can also attend special schools to meet specific educational needs. Some of these schools depend on the Ministry of Social Affairs.

## Legislation

The Comprehensivè Law - *Lei de Bases* - 46/1986- provides the legal framework for all the educational system (special and regular).
Law 319/1991 defines the guidelines of the Regime Educativo Especial - a set of rules to facilitate school attendance for children with special needs and to define the services responsible for the application of such measures in state schools.
The Despacho 36/SEAM/SERE/88 creates special educational teams, the membership of which is made of pre-school teachers, teachers, therapists and other technicians.

## Facts and Figures

- Number of special education teams ..... 235
- Number of schools for mentally handicapped children ..... 184
- Number of children in mainstream schools ..... 1,359,445
- Number of handicapped students in mainstream schools ..... 32,049
- Number of children in special schools ..... 7,656

## Overall Organisation

The Departement of Basic Education *Departamento da Educação Básica*, provides and coordinates the national pedagogical guidelines.
The *Direceao Regional de Educação* - Regional Educational Direction - Portugal is divided into 5 Regional Educational Directions - (DRE) is financially autonomous and provides education at all levels from preschool to secondary school level.
Each district has local educational services *Centro de Area Educativa* to implement the regional educational policy.
The municipalities are responsible for school building and transportation.

### Special educational teams

Local integrated programs are supported by special educational teams. These teams work as a resource network. They have to perform the following tasks:

- to identify children with special needs;
- to work with children in specific areas of the individual educafional curriculum, according to their needs;
- to give advice to regular teachers in the implementation of the IEP-*Plano Educativo Individual*, the use of adapted technology and curriculum adaptation;
- to support families by giving them information about available resources, discussing their children's needs and the measures to be taken;
- to increase communication with local services such as special schools, social security and employment departments;
- to support regular teachers and families in the development of IEP's.

### Psychological and orientation teams

These teams set up a support system for kindergarden, primary and secondary schools. They include educational psychologists, therapists, social workers and teachers.
They have to:

- assess the child's and the family's needs;
- prepare the IEP;

- provide vocational orientation;
- assist the pupil's transition between educational levels and the transition to adult life.

## Different Types of Provision

Special education being usually carried out in normal schools, in kindergardens or at home, the most common measures are the following ones:

- the special teacher works with the child and/or the family (in early intervention programs);
- the special teacher works in the mainstream classroom giving support to the regular teacher and/or giving support to the child;
- the child is taken out of the mainstream classroom to work in a small group with the specialized teacher in a resource room;
- the child is taken out of the mainstream classroom to work individually with the specialized teacher;
- the child attends a limited number of extra teaching hours in a special class;
- the child attends a special class located in the school area.

Whenever ordinary schools lack the appropriate resources to deal with the child's needs, he/she will be directed to a special school.

## The Future

Further efforts should be made in several directions:

- To enhance cooperation between the regular and the special system by increasing the use of special schools as resource centers to support local schools;
- To increase the provision of in-class support and deter part-time attendance in special classes;
- To increase family participation;
- To create more staff development opportunities;
- To increase communication and opportunities for sharing knowledge among all partners involved;
- To include all the legislation concerning special educational needs in the legislation about education in general.

# Spain

## Special Educational Needs within The Spanish System

The Spanish Educational System allows the autonomous regions of Spain to organise their own educational provision. In so doing they must comply with the following principles:

a) standardisation of the educational services: health care is provided by the mainstream services within each region.
b) school integration: special education is provided as much as possible within the mainstream centres.
c) sectorisation of multiprofessional care: the standard criteria are applied to social integration and the required type of education is provided within the student's natural environment.
d) individualisation of education: since the individual is the focus of special education, this principle implies that the educational provision should tend to achieve the maximum development of the individual's abilities.

## Legislation

The current legislation on special educational needs is contained in Article n. 49 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. This article states that "the State will adopt a policy to prevent, to treat, to rehabilitate and to integrate all disabilities."

This statement is included within the Ley de Integracion social de Minusvalias - Act for the Social Integration of People with Disabilities - from 1982 and in the Real Decreto de Ordenacion de Educacion Especial - Royal Decree on Special Education - from 1985. This Royal Decree includes the above mentioned principles and it rules the different modes of schooling, extra support, and the adaptations required to meet the individual's needs.

## Spain

Also in 1985 Experimental Programmes of School Integration - Planificacion de la Educacion Especial y Experimentacion de la Integracion - were introduced in the educational system. These programmes spread rapidly thanks to the Ley organica de Ordenacion General - the National Law of the Educational System in 1990, and finally with the Real Decreto de Ordenacion de la Educacion de los Alumnos con Necesidades Educativas Especiales - Royal Decree on Education of students with special needs in 1995.

### Facts and Figures

In one autonomous region of Spain (The Asturias):

- Number of children in mainstream schools..... 2,690,430
  (Nursery, primary, secondary and vocational training)

- Number of children in special schools..... 10,883

- Number of children with an adapted curriculum..... 37,240
  in mainstream schools

### Overall Organisation

The General Law of Education of 1990 regulates the overall organisation of the educational system in Spain. There are three main stages:

- Infant education: non-compulsory for children up to 6 years.
- Primary education: compulsory from 6 to 12 years.
- Secondary education: compulsory from 12 to 16
  non compulsory for students over 16.

This General Law states that the three stages of education should be adapted to the characteristics of students with special needs. To do so

a) The system will provide the necessary resources: specialised and qualified teachers and suitable teaching materials.
b) Interdisciplinary teams will identify, assess and suggest the guidelines to meet the specific needs of students.

## Different Types of Provision

Three educational approaches are provided to meet special needs, according to the type and degree of disability of every student, to his/her age and to the level of social and personal development.

- Integration centres: students with special needs spend their school and social life in mainstream schools. These centres provide the students with resources and facilities to enable them to take part in educational activities. Integration can be total, combined or partial.
- Special education is located in mainstream centres: this provision is in-between integration centres and special education centres. Students participate in all group activities and they use the same means of transport and cafeteria as the others. The curriculum of these students is based on the mainstream curriculum. However, individual curricular adaptations are more significant than in integration centres.
- Special education centers: the students' disabilities are so severe that very significant curricular adaptations have to be provided.

## The Future

The development of the integration programme will continue in Spain. The most immediate challenge is to encourage special vocational training, which could lead students with disabilities to employment and social integration.

# United Kingdom

## Special Educational Needs within the British System

In the United Kingdom all children, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are part of the Education System and all educational establishments are subject to the same legislation and structure. Those children whose needs cannot reasonably be provided for within the resources normally available to a mainstream school will, following an assessment process, have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The Statement sets out the pupil's needs and the extra help that s/he will receive. The Government's policies in this area are based on the principle that children with SEN, including those with Statements should, where appropriate and taking into account the wishes of their parents, as far as possible be educated in ordinary schools alongside children of the same age.

## Legislation

Following the Warnock Report in 1978, the 1981 Education Act recognised the need for an "education for all".
The 1988 Education Act was the first act in Britain to incorporate educational legislation for both mainstream pupils and pupils with special needs. Schools were to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all, including a National Curriculum. Exclusions from and modifications of this National Curriculum in respect of pupils with Statements were determined.
Finally the 1993 Act introduced a Code of Practice for teachers supporting pupils with SEN particularly in mainstream schools. This recommended using Individual Education Plans to document a staged approach.

## Facts and Figures

In England in 1995

- Number of children in mainstream schools (nursery, primary, secondary and independent) ..... 7,901,125
- Number of children in special schools ..... 98,340
- Number of children with Statements
  in mainstream schools ..... 119,048
  in special schools ..... 91,631

In 1994 a six month target was set for the preparation of a Statement.

The proportion of children with Statements varies from region to region. The lowest proportion was 1.1%, the highest being 4.6%. Nationally in 1995, 2.6% of all pupils had a Statement. This compares with 2.5% in 1994 and 2.3% in 1993.

## Overall Organisation

The national legislative framework is interpreted at local level through the 102 Local Education Authorities (LEA) and individual school policies. Schools are charged with the responsibility of meeting the SEN of their pupils and the Code of Practice identifies the mechanisms by which this responsibility can be devolved to the LEA for approximately 2-3% of pupils (those with severe, complex or profound needs).

## Different Types of Provision

There is no nationally imposed structure of provision. The responsibility for meeting the educational needs of pupils rests with each LEA and should be made by the most appropriate agency.
Currently, special schools exist in most LEAs, but their nature is diverse. A small proportion are independently funded by charities.

## The Future

Future developments will be centred around the implementation of the Code of Practice which has only recently been introduced. A fundamental principle that children with SEN should be educated in mainstream schools where possible will have significant implications for LEAs. They will have to review the provision they make, particularly the role of special schools and support services. The fact that parental preferences are given a high priority may also affect provision. At school level there will be more accountability, and a focus on Individual Education Plans and the role of the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

The effect that the Code of Practice will have on the number of Statements is uncertain.

# Examples of Good Practice in the Area of Mainstream/ Special Education

# Austria

## "Integration : Österreich"

### Summary of Activity

"Integration : Österreich" is an umbrella organisation of parental initiatives for inclusive education of children with special needs in Austria. From the early moment the main motivation of parents and teachers in this initiative has been the belief that even the best-equipped and well-appointed school can not replace a »normal« environment. While segregation of disabled children leads to the communication problems characterized by fear, insecurity or ignorance, a cooperative way of learning and living and playing together of all children would help us to overcome many of these negative feelings.

### History

Local and regional initiatives started in the early eighties and united in 1992 to strengthen its influence on the development and opening of mainstream schools for inclusive education. The success of the movement for inclusion mainly is due to the union of concerned parents, to the cooperation with parents of not handicapped children, with teachers, handicapped adults and other engaged citizens. Based on this movement »Integration : Österreich« grew as an Austrianwide union of parents initiatives, providing a common living together of handicapped and not handicapped people and bringing it one step more closely to its realization.

## Aims

Generally our aim is a school for all children and a further life of adult disabled people sharing the »normality« of our lifes, participating in our living and working conditions without segregation and guaranteeing their maximal autonomy. Social integration in school means creating an environment where children can work, play and live with other children irrespective of their abilities or their social and ethnic background. To establish this way of integration, teachers and other staff of both mainstream and special system have to develop dialogue structures. The core of this dialogue structure is the mainstream class, integrating all children. A school integrating handicapped children in a successful way is a school fitting for all other children too. Its paradigm is the way of living together in school and classroom respecting and accepting the various differences between human beings.
The main achievements of the initiative during the last 15 years have been:

- Inititialization and input in the law-amendment of inclusive opening of schools
- Local, regional and national support of parents in their efforts for inclusion of their children in mainstream schools
- Engagement to guarantee quality, information and evaluation of inclusive education in school and society

## Description of Activity

The integration of parents into the development of frame conditions and decision making, concerning school- and teaching problems for us is a main prerequisite in the process of establishing dialogue structures. Parents have to emphasize that there are no limits of integration caused by the kind of disability of their children, but limits are still in the awareness of teachers and other staff or in unsatisfactory conditions of the environment given by school-laws, curricula, school-administration and local authorities. Inclusion is indivisible and we should be careful not to create differences between children with more or less »abilitiy for integration«. According to our experiences the most important preconditions to raise awareness in this regard are:

- obligate integration of inclusive pedagogics into the training of both mainstream and special teachers.

- obligate realization of decentral and autonomous advisory boards for parents, teachers and other personel dealing with the inclusive process,
- guarantee of counselling and evaluation independent of decisions of educational authorities on local and higher levels,
- heterogeneous groups in a mainstream setting to share the experience of being different but nevertheless accept themselves as persons with both weaknesses and strenghts

## Positive outcomes / Evaluations

Initial data on social integration in Austrian schools show that children with special needs do not learn less in integrated classes. Often, the achievements of all children are superior, quite probably owing to the individualized and more open instruction. The children with special educational needs are well-integrated and the parents are apparently pleased with the integrated approach. An increasing number of parents want their children to attend integrated classes. Most teachers, despite an increased workload, without extra pay, enjoy teaching inclusive classes and discribe this new approach as a positive change. The majority of teachers accept the challenge and are prepared to develop new approaches to their teaching. As a result, the social integration of children with special educational needs might not only improve teaching and learning in mainstream schools, but also contribute to an improvement in teacher training. Teacher training is a vital element of the integration approach, as is the availability of counselling guidance. Once there is a legal framework for the integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools, informations and public relations are important. Those who reject integration often do so because they lack information and providing information and advice helps to raise the awareness.

It is neither wise nor just to paint a too optimistic picture of integration. There were difficulties during the pilot scene and also during the regular implementation of the inclusive law amendment, but these were and will be mostly overcome in the future. The most heartening aspect of the work was and is the enthusiasm and ability of the parents and teachers who took and take part. A spirit developed over the years, a feeling that a new type of school is being created and that we are taking part in the first genuine process of educational reform.

## Future perspectives

- the regular continuation of the school inclusion into the junior high school and the organization of pilot projects for the upper level of secondary school education on the background of experiences in other European countries,
- the creation of a wider scope of possibilities in regard to inclusive vocational training for students with special needs,
- improvement of environmental supportive conditions for handicapped children and their parents and awareness raising in concerned institutions from the earliest beginning (centres for prenatal diagnostics, hospitals, early intervention centres, medical and social welfare centres etc.)

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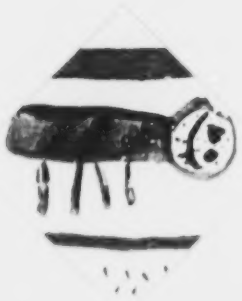
# Belgium



## Secondary School for Special Education Bu.S.O. "DE DAGERAAD" Kortessem

### Summary of Activity

Establishing a dialogue structure with a special secondary school, mainstream vocational schools and a psychological-medical-social advising centre as partners, to (re)integrate pupils with mild mental disabilities or learning disturbances.

### History

"De Dageraad - Kortessem" is an institute for special education, which includes a medical pedagogical institute, organizing the types 1, 2, and 8 of special education, and a special secondary school, organizing the types 1, 2, 3 and 4 of special education in the forms 1, 2 and 3. (For details on the types of spedial education, please see the description of the Belgian education system). The secondary department started in 1993 to establish a special/mainstream interaction model.

### Aims

Create a theoretical basis for an interaction model

- to integrate pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream school,
- to re-integrate pupils with a special educational history in the mainstream school.

## Description of Activity

The project was targetting on different types of pupils:

- Pupils with a learning disturbance (type 8 of special education) after the transition from a special primary school to a secondary vocational school.
- Pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream school.
- Pupils in a special secondary school.

**The main questions:**

- What are the conditions for a successful re-integration?
- What basic skills should a child have in order to (re)integrate?
- When is a (temporary) transition to the special system necessary?
- Which additional support from the special system is desirable/possible?
- How can the knowledge in special needs education be saved?

**The steps in practice:**

- Meetings with members from psychological-medical-social advising centres, to derterminate pupils and schools to start up interaction.
- Contact with principals of mainstream schools to propose the idea.
- Contact from principals with teachers of selected pupils to examine the willingness and readiness to take part.
- Contacts from special teacher to mainstream teacher to elaborate a working plan, to exchange information and experience, to give practical support.
- Elaborating and evaluating the plan.

## Evaluation of Activity

The interaction/co-operation was started on a voluntary basis. It involved a lot of spare time and extra work for the partners. In most of the cases, the phase of preparation was very fruitful. In the stage of turning the theoretical plan into actions however, many practical problems arose. The project was limited to individual cases.

## Future Perspectives

The project showed that mainstream/special education interaction and (re)integration of pupils with special educational needs is possible in some cases. These activities should be supported by the Department of Education, in terms of legal provisions.

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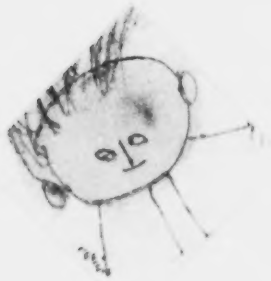
# Denmark



## "Dialogue Centre Projects"

Enhancing Co-operation between Special and Mainstream Schools
Region: Funen

### History

Four years ago the local education authorities approached the County of Funen (Regional Education Authorities responsible for the education of children with severe and profound special educational needs) because their mainstream schools were having difficulties in meeting the needs of some of their integrated students with specific special educational needs. The students were not progressing because mainstream schools did not have enough knowledge about their specific disabilities and educational needs. The County of Funen responded by setting up, on an experimental basis, three Dialogue Centre Projects.

### Aims

The Dialogue Centre Projects are structures which facilitate enhanced interaction between special and mainstream schools and support services, and are instrumental in making highly specialised expertise available to the mainstream schools and support services.

Their main objective is to enable mainstream school children with severe and profound special educational needs to stay at their own local school and provide the expertise to support this.

## Description of activities

In the Dialogue Centres Projects, students whose special educational needs are not met suficiently at their own school, and students who for other reasons seem to be stuck in a status quo position from which they are unlikely to be lifted by means of the existing educational expertise available at their own school, are given the opportunity to attend a 4-8 week intensive assessment programme.

During this period an in-depth analysis and interdisciplinary assessment of the individual student and his/her total circumstances is carried out, and suggestions for teaching methods are worked out, tested and evaluated.

Following this, the student returns to his/her own local school with a complete and very detailed individual curriculum and an individual teaching programme, including suggested methods and resources to be applied in the local school.

All those concerned with the child are involved throughout the process. This includes the local teachers and educational psychologist, as well as the parents, all of whom work in a team with the specialists affiliated to the Dialogue Centre (clinical and educational psychologists, educational advisors, specially trained teachers, therapists, etc).

Subsequently, close professional contact is maintained, including regular follow-up meetings at which the local teachers can seek advice on how best to proceed with a student's educational programme.

Two of the Dialogue Centres are situated at mainstream schools. One, at the Rosengårdsskole, is specifically designed to deal with the needs of physically disabled children with profound learning disabilities (severe perceptual, cognitive and communication disorders, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, etc). The other, at the Ejbyskole, is designed to deal with the needs of children with speech and language impairments. The third is located at a special school, the Skrillingeskole, and deals specifically with children with profound mental disabilities.

## Evaluation

The projects have been submitted to extensive external evaluation. In their report the National Institute for Pedagogical and Educational Research concludes: "The Dialogue-projects are a success and it is recommended that similar projects be established for other groups of students with specific learning difficulties". Amongst the things which are seen as particularly positive are the facts that they generate feedback to mainstream schools that helps them to bridge the knowledge gaps; that they reassure parents that maximum expertise is always available; and that they are package offers which take the students' entire situation into consideration.

The results achieved at the Rosengårdskole are generally very encouraging. At the Ejbyskole, the result has been that nearly all students will be in integrated settings from the 5th or 6th form, provided they have received the Dialogue support described above. The project at the Skrillingeskole has been least successful thus far. This is presumably due to the fact that this project deals with the severest cases of mental disability, i.e. children who have enormous difficulties in functioning as part of the group in an ordinary classroom. In spite of this, the best of these students have made encouraging progress when special school expertise has been made available to the mainstream schools. To a large extent, however, the procedure here has been for special school teachers and psychologists to work with these children in their own local school, instead of the children attending a special school or special unit at a mainstream school for a period of time, as is the case at the other centres.

## Future perspectives

In Denmark, 99.5 % of all children are educated in mainstream schools, and only 0.5% attend special schools. At the same time, there is increasing pressure to respond to a growing number of specific diagnoses (over 240 at present) and accompanying specific demands to educationalists.

In this context, the Dialogue Centre concept is seen as one of the most important tools to respond to these developments which are making ever greater demands for innovation through the collection, processing and sharing of information and

expertise. The projects have also shown that healthy competition between mainstream and special schools results in synergy. The Dialogue programmes are now in great demand (i.e. they are popular and requested by schools and parents). The future will see the number of students attending these programmes increasing dramatically. The programmes themselves will be shorter in duration and contain regular follow-up programmes.

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# France

## Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec

Region: Ile de France

### Summary of Activity

Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec is a mainstream school in which students with physical disabilities are educated together with mainstream students in an environment which provides them with all the medical and environmental support they need. All students follow the same curricula, take the same degrees and get the same qualifications.

### History

Forty years ago, a medical Professor in the Raymond Poincaré Hospital in Garches was convinced that the children and teenagers who had to spend several years in hospital had to be taught. He asked the Ministère de l'Education nationale to create a lycée for them which was originally called Lycée d'Etat mixte de Garches since it was first located within the hospital.
This high school was born from the determination to regard children and teenagers with disabilities not only as patients but as students. It was devised by the students together with their parents, their teachers, and their physicians and it is based upon the idea that there is no sound medical therapy without teaching: pas de rééducation sans éducation.

In 1980, a huge school was built in Vaucresson. Since it could accommodate boarders, all the children who only needed regular physical therapy could leave the hospital and were transferred to Vaucresson. The school consisted of an

elementary school, a middle school and a high school. Some years later, several post- baccalauréat technical classes were opened. A medical center accessible on a daily basis was provided within the school.

## Aims

In this school children and teenagers with special needs are given the opportunity to attend a mainstream school, to get medical support and to be involved in the social life of their age group. Such a school makes it possible to carry out a single project - both educational and medical - for each individual child: as soon as a young patient can leave the hospital, as a child with a disability can cope with mainstream education, he/she is integrated both in a day school, in a boarding school and in a medical center.

## Description of Activity

The school is a mainstream school at elementary, secondary and post- baccalauréat level. All students that can follow the national curriculum are encouraged to do so. That's why the Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec can invite teenagers from the neighbourhood in all its classes. Thus not only is any segration avoided but a real integration can be achieved. Mainstream teachers teach a mixed community of children and teenagers with and witout disabilities. Learning, teaching and living together is considered a very rich experience by both students and staff.
It is also a special school in which special provision is made to meet the needs of students with severe physical handicaps thanks to technical aides and specific working conditions. All the school facilities are wheel-chair accessible. The school provides architectural facilities which enable each student to live comfortably, to work out a personal project, to socialize, to make plans for the future. Academic achievements are viewed as a passport for vocational education, University entrance and integration in the society at large.
Teachers, educators and all the members of the medical centre - medical doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists, speech therapists - work closely together thus providing a dialogue structure inside the school. In so-called réunions de synthèse, all partners in the educational process voice their concerns, listen to the others' opinions, exchange information and make relevant decisions concerning the students.

## Evaluation of Activity

Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec provides a high quality service and is a model of inclusion of students with disabilities in a mainstream school. Yet several adjustments have been necessary to meet a wide range of academic performance:

- individualized curriculum and teaching for small groups of children.
- slow-learner progression (le cycle lent ) for groups of maximum ten students who meet the requirements of the standard middle school curriculum in five years instead of four years.
- at secondary level, a special class in which the emphasis is put on methodology and remediation
- and a slow-learner curriculum for teenagers with severe physical disabilities.
- a differenciated pedagogy in terms of requirements and evaluation in physical education at all levels.
- an emphasis on travels abroad - England, the United States, Germany and Spain - and in France as well as on artistic and social achievements -drama, art, music, chess, sports.

## Future Perspectives

- Teachers are qualified teachers appointed by the Ministry of National Education. Their daily job is to teach mixed groups of students with disabilities together with mainstream students, to do research and to work out methods and means to counterbalance the disadvantages of physical disabilities. They will have to share their expertise with secondary teachers in mainstream schools who will increasingly have students with disabilities in their classes.
- Lycée Toulouse-Lautrec has only been recently equipped with modern technology. The whole teaching and educational staff has to be involved, to be trained and to work hard to use this new equipment efficiently.
- Students with disabilities benefit from the help of both volunteer and salaried staff. An effort should be made to prepare them to be self-sufficient after school, at college, in the workplace or in their social life. That is why the school keeps in touch with universities, firms, the business world and parents' associations.
- The main difficulty lies in the integration of students with increasingly heavier

physical disabilities. The greatest worry concerns academic success for all and the life of students with severe disabilities after school.

### Contact

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## Académie de Lyon

Region: Département du Rhône - Lyon

### Summary of Activity

The medical teams who were taking care of psychotic and autistic children in a daycare hospital or in a health care centre asked for the creation of classes in the neighbourhood schools to enable these children's academic and social integration. Presently about ten classes of this type are open in pre-elementary and elementary schools. A new class has just opened in a middle school.

### History

Since the late 80's, a first project due to the initiative of a child psychiatrist from Lyon has been worked out.. The Ministère de l'Education nationale provides a trained special needs teacher to take care of these children.
During the 80's, other classes were created in partnership with care centres. They were called classes thérapeutiques. In partnership with associations of parents of downsyndrome, psychotic and autistic children and with care services, two Unités Pédagogiques d'Intégration (UPI) based upon the ministerial texts of March 1995 were created in two middle schools in Lyon.

## Aims

- This structure aims at developing as much as possible the capacities of downsyndrome, autistic or psychotic children.
- It makes it possible to tap into the specific professional skills of pedagogues, therapists and educators and use their different and complementary expertise.
- It favours the participation and the cooperation of families in working out and following their children's plans.
- In mainstream classrooms, it raises the teachers' and the pupils' awareness of the life of children with disabilities.

## Description of Activity

Within the school framework disabled or ill children are supported by a service of special transport. Each one is appointed to a school according to an individual plan taking into account his or her disability. This plan makes clear the mission, the role and the types of action required from each partner in the process.
Regular réunions de synthèse between the various professionals ensure that each plan is properly carried out, assessed and adjusted whenever necessary.
Plans are made on the basis of the mainstream national curriculum.
The teacher in the child's classroom is given a pre-service and an in-service training.
Finally the number of pupils in the classroom is limited to eight.

## Evaluation of the Activity

There does not exist at the moment a scientific procedure of evaluation. Families and therapists just ascertain the progress made by the children. As a result, there is an increasing demand for the creation of such classes.

## Future perspectives

- The network has to be further developed.
- In-service teacher training has to be oriented towards increased cooperation between professionals.

- Smilar classes should be created in secondary schools to ensure a continued learning process.

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# Germany

## Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft - Gemeinsam Leben - Gemeinsam Lernen - Eltern gegen Aussonderung (BAG)

Region: Germany - Hamburg

### Summary of Activity

The BAG is a union of parents of children with or without disabilities involved in promoting inclusive education. Representatives of parents' organizations in the 16 federal Länder meet to share their experiences and to support each other in promoting inclusive education in different political and local conditions. Parents from 13 of the 16 federal Länder are represented in the BAG.

### History

This parents' movement was born from a positive experience in inclusive education at preschool level. About 15 years ago, parents of disabled children first struggled to organize integrative kindergarten groups to avoid segregation through special education. Disabled children as well as normal children's parents experienced that growing up together was beneficial to all children. So they worked together to bring about adequate conditions for inclusive education at school level.

The idea was to provide all children with good schools. It was acknowledged that, in very heterogeneous groups, experiencing difference while belonging to the same group was profitable to all children. They could develop competencies while living together and accept each other and they got the chance to accept themselves as persons with both their weaknesses and their strengths. These parents shared the

belief that children with special needs should experience living in normal social surroundings to be able to cope with their conditions in normal life. That way they would be able to develop self-confidence as accepted members of society with their special needs. At the same time they need to learn in conditions which would be good for all children. Especially small classes and individualized teaching strategies would be supportive for all children. That's why mixed ability integration classes were launched.

## Overall Organisation

Then parents' initiatives started all over Western Germany. They set up federal unions Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften (LAGs). These unions work on a local basis to promote integrative thinking as well as bring about adequate conditions for integrative practices. The LAGs have associated in the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft (the BAG) in order to share experiences and work with other social organizations all over Germany. The BAG has two official spokespersons to voice their basic positions.

## Description of Activity

In some of the federal Länder, parents in the LAGs have become important advisers and even experts in the process of educational development. Locally, parents, professionals and politicians now often work together to extend and improve inclusive education. After having started with experimental classes in elementary schools and succeeded in changing educational laws in some of the federal Länder, the movement has turned to promoting integrative practice in secondary education and lately to the difficult task of organizing young adults' supported employment and independent living conditions.

## Aims

Altogether, the movement supports the philosophy of equal human rights for all children however severe their disability may be. The right to grow up in normal social settings and to live a self-determined life as an accepted member of society should be granted to all of them; society has to provide living conditions that fit the needs of all its members.

An Example of Integration practice in Hamburg

- Elementary schools have started to develop into inclusive schools that are open to all children living in a given district. Special needs teachers belong to the staff of the mainstream school. They may work as support teachers in different classes or they work in teams with the mainstream teachers of the class in so called Integrationklassen - integration classes.

- Teamwork in the classroom allows teachers to develop individual curricula and to support several children with different special needs. In integration classes, two teachers can always be present in the classroom so that even very severely disabled children may be integrated. Usually there are 3 or 4 children with different disabilities in a class of 20 pupils.

- In secondary education, integration classes are mostly placed in comprehensive schools so that the concept of learning in heterogeneous classes can be maintained. Team work between mainstream and special needs teachers becomes even more important as the number of subject teachers increases. Social education workers help to support the process of social learning among the youths.

- Special tasks for practical learning are offered at school to students with mental handicaps. Cooperation with vocational schools helps to prepare their transition to integrative forms of vocational training.

## Future Perspectives

- At present students of the first integration classes are coming to the end of their training in vocational schools. They start living by themselves outside their families, and adequate jobs have to be found.

- For these youths, living and learning together has become normal. Parents and teachers are convinced that, for the development of their personality, these students benefited a great deal from taking up the challenge of going through new experiments.

- For some of the students there have been hard times of conflicts during

puberty. But they have usually developed a good deal of self-confidence and good competences. However, in the higher grades, students with mental disabilities may get isolated in their class, when there are no children with similar interests. So it seems reasonable to have some more children with a mental disability in the schools as well as more time to increase social contacts and extracurricular activities.

- Most teachers find it difficult to acquire competence in individualized teaching strategies and to get used to team-teaching. In secondary education, basic teaching attitudes often have to be changed. Therefore, teachers need some training and continual advice to achieve good practice. Communication skills are important prerequisites for integrative work. However, teachers acquire the necessary skills by working together and supervision may help them greatly to renew their way of teaching.

- Changing attitudes, habits and structures in schools is a very complex task that takes much time and energy. Wherever integration has been achieved, the quality of school work has noticeably improved. So schools wish more and more to go on working towards inclusive education provided an adequate framework of working conditions is maintained.

## Contacts

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# Ireland

## Pobalscoil Rosmini

Region: Dublin

### Summary of Activity

The Pobalscoil Rosmini activity has evolved from a project which first began in 1970 when the local Primary National School for the Visually Impaired invited mainstream students to join their students with a view to developing a Second Level Mainstream School which would include students who are visually impaired. The Voluntary Secondary School first established in 1970 became a Community School in 1982.

### Aims

Pobalscoil Rosmini is a Mainstream Second Level School in which students who are visually impaired and students with other significant special needs are educated with their peers in the national Second Level Curriculum. It is a Community School which seeks to serve the educational needs of the community in which it is located. The school provides free Second Level education for children irrespective of ability. The ethos of the school is based on the educational thought of Antonio Rosmini, the founder of the Rosminian Order of Roman Catholic priests, brothers and nuns.

### Description of Activity

There are at present 450 students in the school. Students with special needs will first be identified by the Ministry through the services of Visiting Teachers and Educational Psychologists. 14% of the school population are students with

significant special needs, among whom 9% are visually impaired. The students in Pobalscoil Rosmini are drawn mainly from the local community. Approximately 4% of the school population are visually impaired students who are residential. Those students come from all over Ireland. The majority of the visually impaired students in Pobalscoil Rosmini have attended the Special Primary National School nearby which is managed by the Rosminian Order.

Students with significant disability other than visual impairment in the local community, are attracted to the school because of its facilities. Parents choose to send their child to Pobalscoil Rosmini because of its policy of inclusion in the provision education in the National Curriculum.

Students attend classes with their peers who are studying subjects on the National Curriculum. Class groups are of mixed ability, and may contain students with many different needs which could include visual, hearing, physical, intellectual or emotional disability. The visually impaired students have a classroom base to which they may return when they require added resources or assistance. This assistance is provided by the Resource Teachers.

The Board of Management of the school includes representatives of the Rosminian Order, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, parents and teachers. It operates according to the terms of the Deed of Trust in cooperation with the Irish Ministry of Education. The school has a staff of 37 among whom are five posts which are extra to the staff of a regular mainstream school. These posts are: 2 Resource Teachers and a Mobility Officer for the visually disabled, a Special Education Needs Teacher and a Nurse.

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**Other Projects at Secondary Level In Ireland**

1. Ballinteer Community School, Ballinteer, Dublin. (Physical)
2. Bishopstown Community School, Bishopstown, Cork. (Hearing)
3. Ballymun Comprehensive School, Ballymun, Dublin. (Physical)

# The Netherlands

## Regionaal Samenwerkindsverband VO-VSO Eibergen e.o.

Broadening scope of care, a co-operative project between mainstream and secondary special education.
Region: Eibergen

### Summary of Activity

The project is a co-operation between three secondary schools and one mainstream school - the Het Assink.

Most of the pupils of the special schools have invisible handicaps like: learning difficulties, moderate and severe behavioural problems as well as social-emotional problems.
Most of the pupils attending the Het Assink have a 'normal' intelligence; some have an IQ between 75 and 90; the latter come from primary and secondary special schools for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLK) and with learning and behavioural difficulties (LOM).

### History

The 'broadening scope of care' project was initiated by the government to enhance the co-operation between special and mainstream education.
The project started 10 years ago as a bilateral one between a secondary school for severe socially and emotionally handicapped children (the De Gildemeester) and two regular secondary vocational schools, which are now part of the Het Assink.. Three years ago the project was extended to two other special schools.

## Aims

The aim of the project ten years ago was to transfer as many pupils as possible from the special to the regular system.
Nowadays the aim is also to find out the conditions in which we can learn from each other's expertise.

## Description of Activity

- Pupils with an IQ between 75 and 90: they represent about 6% of the total school population, which means about 150 pupils. They are placed in small groups of 10 to 15 pupils and they do not follow the standard curriculum but a 'group'curriculum.

- Pupils with dyslexia / dyscalculia / dysorthografia: they represent about 4 % of the total population (about 100 pupils). These pupils follow the standard curriculum. An individual helping plan is made for them by a pedagogue or a psychologist. For one or two hours a week a remedial teacher will carry out the helping plan. Pupils with this invisible handicap will be helped for one year to cope with their handicap.

- Pupils with severe behavioural problems: at the moment there are 8 pupils from the secondary special school the De Gildemeester. They attend several regular classes; mostly they have an adapted timetable as well as an adapted curriculum. They are also guided by a parepatic teacher.

In 1994 a new course called AVMB - general preparation to society and work - was prepared. In August 1995 the course started with 10 pupils. It works as a sort of special class in a mainstream school.

A regional consultation network has been established. Among its members there are: a counselor, a school doctor, a social worker, a psychologist and an official responsible for compulsory education.

## Evaluation of the Activity

By means of small groups, group curricula, individual helping plans, adapted timetables and adapted curricula, a new course and with the help of specialists inside the school such as remedial teachers, parepatic teachers, counselors and of specialists outside the school - pedagogues, psychologists - we succeed in achieving co-operative interaction between mainstream and special education, which means we also succeed in diminishing drop-outs.
A practical problem arises from the fact that classes have become too big for financial reasons. Children who have attended small groups for two years, are put in groups of over 25 pupils in their third school year. Their school performance may decrease for lack of care.

## Future Perspectives

The Dutch government wants to create helping structures (HS) to cope with the problems co-operative interaction between special and mainstream system may cause. One of the problems will be to find ways to keep the expertise of the special schools and transfer it as an added value to mainstream schools. A working-group with two members of each project-school has been set up to prepare an effective co-operation on Helping Structures and Arbeidsmarktgerichte Leerweg.

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# Samenwerkingsverband VO-VSO Midden Kennermerland

Broadening scope of care, a co-operative project between mainstream and secondary special education.
Region: Ijmuiden

## Summary of Activity

The project is a co-operation between five secondary schools for special education and five mainstream schools. Most of the pupils of the secondary schools for special education have invisible handicaps such as learning difficulties, moderate and severe behavioural problems as well social emotional problems. Most of the pupils have a 'normal' intelligence; some have an IQ between 75 and 90; these pupils come from primary and secondary special schools for children with learning and behavioural difficulties called LOM and for children with moderate learning difficulties called MLK.

## History

The "Broadening scope of care" project was initiated by the government to enhance co-operation between special and mainstream education. The project started 10 years ago as a bilateral one between a secondary school for 'handicapped' children (Flevumschool) and five secondary mainstream education schools. The co-operation with the other four secondary schools for special education started two years ago.

## Aims

In this co-operative project the five mainstream schools and the five schools for special education attempt:

- to integrate as many pupils as possible in the mainstream school.
- to keep as many students with learning or behavioural problems as possible in the mainstream school in co-operation with special education teachers.

## Description of activity

In this co-operative project the main themes are:

### 1. education

- co-operation with regard to admittance, relegation and placing in secondary mainstream education.
- co-operation with regard to care and attention for students who were transferred from special schools to mainstream schools and to a lesser extent from mainstream to special schools.
- active encouragement for children changing from special school to mainstream school with counseling and guidance by people from secondary special education schools.
- remedial teaching and guided homework.
- preventive guidance for students in the mainstream school by teachers from special schools who work at the mainstream school for a day in the week in co-operation with a teacher of that school.
- 'symbiosis' i.e. students from special secondary schools attend lessons at the secondary mainstream schools, mainly practical subjects like handcraft, technical drawing etc.

### 2. prevention

- screening tests in lower secondary classes.
- systematically counseling and guiding students.
- stuctural guidance for all students.
- preventive activities in the mainstream school by teachers of the special school.
- working at the collective responsibility of all the schools in the region.

### 3. training

- seminars for teachers were held on topics such as fear of failure, determination, concentration and dyslexia.
- consultation groups of teachers at the schools are being set up.

- internal activities are promoted within schools in relation to admittance, relegation, placing, attention and expertise.

## Evaluation

The co-operation between teachers of mainstream and special education schools is very successful (teachers learn from each other's expertise).
External specialists (pedagogues, psychologists) coming from special education schools provide a help.

## Future Perspectives

The Dutch government wants to create 'helping structures' (HS) to cope with the problems co-operative interaction between the special and mainstream school systems may raise. One of those problems will be to find a way to maintain the expertise of special schools and transfer it as an added value to the mainstream schools. Our co-operative project started with this theme and worked out a successful co-operative interaction.

## Contact

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# Stichting Mytylsschool Zeeland "De Sprienke" An Open School for Physically Handicapped Children

Region: Goes

## Summary of Activity

The project consists of subprojects classified according to the ages of the children and grouped in divisions/sections of the school.

1. physically handicapped pupils (3-7)
2. physically handicapped pupils (7-14)
3. multiple-handicapped pupils (7-14)
4. multiple-handicapped pupils (7-17)
5. physical handicapped pupils (14-20)
6. all mytylschool pupils (7-20)

Some projects aim at strengthening the special school (3and4). Others (1,2 and 5) at cooperation between special and mainstream school to integrate physically handicapped children and teenagers from special into mainstream school. Project 6 concerns the integration of mytylpupils in social life.

## History

Mytylschool De Sprienke was originally a rehabilitation centre founded in 1906. The school started in 1945. Until 1994 the school was under the responsibility of the board of the centre. Now the school has become an autonomous institute.

## Aims

1. Short term: to prevent parents from roaming around in the specialised system.
   Long term: to collect expertise and equipment and transfer them from special into mainstream schools.

2. Short term: to make contacts with primary schools
   Long term: to integrate physically handicapped children into mainstream schools.

3. to develop contacts in areas providing no special schools to extend cooperation with special schools in the area

4. Short term: to start work groups for teachers and staff from 2 schools
   Long term: to merge both special systems into one.

5. Short term: to intensify the existing contacts with secondary schools
   Long term: to integrate physically handicapped youngsters into mainstream schools.

6. to foster the participation of physically handicapped children in sports.

## Description of activity

1. A project with three schools for special education in Goes to combine expertise, therapy, educational climate and so on. The four schools work together with other mainstream schools and specialists. Mainstream and special education teachers work in groups on different topics such as the tuning of teaching and instructional materials and teaching aids, pupil monitoring system, coping with individual educational routes.

2. By means of peripetatic supervision. Each year a study meeting is organised. Cooperation-agreements between the school and WSNS to share expertise.

3. This subproject concerns a group of children that cannot be described easily. Some are autistic or other suffer from pervasive mental disorders. There are many contacts with mental health institutions, psychiatrists, institutes for the deaf or the blind and academic hospitals. The project adresses the lack of special schools in the area.

4. A project with a school for children with major learning difficulties. The

-younger pupils benefit from our knowledge and our therapists. The older ones also benefit from working in more stimulating groups with more differentiated activities.

5. This project aims at providing a school presenting the characteristics of a secondary school. Most pupils are practically trained, but some take their official exams. We look for possibilities to cooperate with secondary mainstream schools. Through the counsellor we deal with physically handicapped children in mainstream secondary schools. To develop cooperation for the benefit of our own pupils several contacts are kept with special and regular schools and much effort is brought to job training in the building.

6. This project aims at cooperation with a regional advising-council to integrate children in sportsclub, youth clubs, scouts, horseriding activities. Children are stimulated to participate actively in society. There are meetings with other schools, basketball tournaments.

## Evaluation

The activities around the projects did bring what was expected from them. A greater involvement of the complete team in the overall-project has not yet been achieved. It will be an important issue to ensure a broader development of the experiences in the various subprojects.

## Future Perspectives

A further development of the long term goals that have been listed and the adjustment of the current projects to the developments which are taken place in the educational field in The Netherlands are the two main prospects for the future.

## Contact

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# Regionaal Samenwerkindsverband "De Rotonde"

Broadening scope of care, a co-operative project between mainsteam and secondary special education.
Region: Rotterdam

## Summary of Activity

De Rotonde is a school for secondary special education in Rotterdam. The pupils' age vary from 12 to 16. They attend De Rotonde, because they have "invisible handicaps" such as dyslexia, (other) learning difficulties, behavioural problems and social problems. After a period of 2 or 3 years, these students are integrated in a regular secondary school.

De Rotonde works in a project for co-operation between seven schools for regular secondary education and two schools for special education. All schools are located in or nearby Rotterdam.

## History

The project "broadening scope of care" was initiated " years ago by the government to enhance co-operation between special and mainstream education. The policy of De Rotonde was already to integrate as many students in mainstream schools as possible. The reasons to start the project were:

- the increasing number of children who are attending special schools.
- financial problems
- the belief that it is not good to have children in segregated schools

## Aims

The aim of the project is to transfer students from special schools into the mainstream system.
Therefore, mainstream schools have to increase their expertise, so as to be able to cope with the problems of all the students.

## Description of the activity

- Teacher training can be done by individual training, in-service training and collegial consultation.
- Admittance and selection: the schools in the project compare their screening procedures in order to agree upon general procedures.
- Ambulant help (or resource teachers). The ambulant helper works with students if necessary, keeps contact with their mentors and parents and gives general advice.

## Evaluation

It is possible to decrease the number of students in special schools. It is also possible to shorten the period during which they attend special schools as well as to organise a good flexible system of care in a mainstream school.

The quality of the special education (resource-teachers for instance) has to be maintained.
The budget for special needs should be spent at the right place.

## Future perspectives

The Dutch government intends to create a special structure in the mainstream system (a helping structure). In this structure De Rotonde will be the organiser of the special needs sector. They will:

- send resource-teachers to regular schools.
- provide a place for those who are temporarily unable to attend a regular school.
- play a role of consultant towards the mainstream schools.

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# Portugal

## Escola Básica 2-3 Póvoa de St. Adrião - Loures

Region: Lisbon

### Summary of Activity

It is a basic school with the 2nd and 3rd cycles of elementary education (2nd cycle: 5th and 6th year; 3rd cycle: 7th, 8th and 9th year) in the outskirts of Lisbon, with a total population of 800 pupils, 171 of which have special needs.
Fourteen pupils with severe disabilities are integrated in the school. These students range from 10 to 15 years of age.

### Origin

A group of pupils with disabilities has been enrolled in the school. The school from its early beginning is very motivated to create the best possible resources to integrate this group of pupils with special educational needs, with a particular emphasis on motor disabilities.

### Aims

- To provide opportunities for local, social, academical and functional integration
- To enable pupils to follow the regular academical curriculum providing the necessary adaptations
- To motivate children's both intellectual and motor capacities through the development of the individual autonomy and independence

- To plan pupil's adult life through a close coordination with the pupil and the family
- To promote socialization and interaction with peers from the neighbourhood.

## Description of the activity

There are three groups of pupils with disabilities:

- pupils with cerebral palsy and no oral communication (most of them in wheel chair and using computers to communicate and to work in the classroom),
- pupils with severe learning disabilities,
- pupils with low vision.

The special education teacher works in the classroom with the mainstream teacher. Classrooms have a limited number of 20 pupils. Some of them also have individual support in academical subjects according to their needs. Individual technological training is also provided to all pupils who can benefit from its use.
One school teacher supervises the functioning of all the technological equipment. A physiotherapist, an occupational therapist and a speech therapist from a special school located in the area visit the school to give support to the pupils and to work with the supervisor and with the teachers.
Assistant teachers provide for basic care, such as feeding, toileting and handling pupils with cerebral palsy.

## Evaluation

The project evaluation considers the following points: pupils' progress, team work, the adequacy and frequency ifi the use of all electronical materials, the family and pupil's opinions.

- The pupils follow the national curriculum successfully.
- Their interaction with their peers continues outside the school since they attend their local school.
- Parents participate in school activities.

Unfortunately the activity has not enough resources (computers, software, etc.)

## Future perspectives

- Increase the work to be done with families.
- Develop awareness raising strategies to support financial demands.
- Enhance cooperation with the special school of the area.

## Contact

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# Spain

## "Maturity rooms"

### Summary of Activity

"Maturity rooms" is one of the modes of educational care for students with special needs. It is a permanent activity at the level of Infant Education (3 to 6 years old) and, exceptionally, on the first cycle of Primary Education (6 to 8 years old).
This kind of educational provision known as "maturity rooms" demands a very close relationship between special and mainstream schools as this individualised attention paid to each student takes place daily in both types of schools: in the morning, students attend a special school and, in the afternoon, they remain at a mainstream school where they have been appointed.

### History

This educational mode has its origin in the need to organise an educational environment for infants to receive very specialised care and to take part at the same time in normalised social contexts.

### Aims

The aim of this type of provision is to adjust the educational system to the particular demands of the students who require significant adaptations to the national curricula. However, they are capable to continue with integration programs within mainstream schools.

## Description of Activity

A "maturity room" is a resource that special schools offer to some students in the area in order to develop intensive programmes which encourage students to learn basic techniques needed to achieve their full integration.

The educative care for students with special needs is provided according to the resources that each individual requires. In this way, the Ministry of Education in Asturias, based on the psychopedagogic reports written by the Psychopedagogic and Educational Guidance Teams ("EOEP"), appoints each student to the best type of school for him/her, either to a special or to a mainstream centre. It is necessary to remember that all mainstream schools on infant and primary levels offer the possibility of integrating students with special needs.

The pedagogic team responsible for each student is composed of the following specialists: the classroom tutor from the mainstream school, the specialised teachers who look after the student at the special school, an adviser from the special school and an adviser from the Psychopedagogic and Educational Guidance Team of the mainstream school. All of them form a committee to follow the process of each student. Their main functions are: a) to propose the basic work guidelines, b)to distribute the tasks drawn from the achievement of the programmes and from the evaluation of each student.

This committee is in charge of taking all the decisions as regards the family follow-up, timetables, changes in schooling, etc. The members of the committee are obliged to meet at the beginning and at the end of the school year and also whenever their members feel it necessary for the best fulfilment of their functions.

The planning and the proposals to develop the programme are decided upon by the Department of Attention to Diversity, which belongs to the Educational Programmes Unit sited at the Ministry of Education Office in Asturias. This planning includes the provision of the necessary resources for the programme "Maturity rooms": personal resources (teachers, educators, physiotherapists, speech-and-hearing-impairment specialists and sign teachers), material resources (transport between centres, specific equipment, administrative budget, etc.). In Asturias there are four state schools which offer this service located in the central and most populated area of the region: Oviedo, Gijón, Avilés and Langreo.

## Evaluation

**Strong points of the programme:**

- It entails an advance in the relationship and coordination between mainstream centres and special ones;
- It meets the educational needs of those students which could not follow education in only one type of centre;
- It also fulfils the schooling expectations of some of the students' parents.

**Weak points:**

- It involves that, since a significant number of professionals take part in the programme, coordination is often difficult;
- It also involves the provision of resources (teachers, equipment..) and infrastructures (transport, refectory...) through a non-mainstream system.

## Future Perspectives

The most immediate perspectives can be summarised as:

- To maintain and expand this schooling type;
- To systematise the provision of resources.

## Contact

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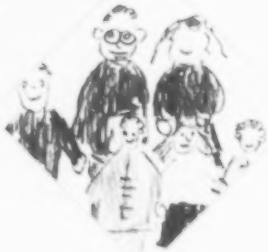

## Round Oak School, Cluster and Support Team

Region: Warwickshire

### Summary of Activity

A support service which works across 66 local mainstream schools from a special school base. Support is provided for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. 8 mainstream schools have clusters of pupils and additional staff managed from the core special schools. Pupils are supported in prioritised areas of the curriculum within mainstream classes. The age of the pupils ranges from 5 - 16.

### History

In 1986, Warwickshire County Council reviewed its special educational provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
Then, in 1989, two special schools were closed and Round Oak was opened.

This new system was designed to cater for a range of pupils. Some pupils receive their special education in the core special school and others are educated in a mainstream environment with specialist support. The mainstream schools are called cluster schools. Situated at the core school there is a resource base providing materials that can be used in both special and mainstream schools. There is total flexibility of placements between the core and cluster schools.

## Aims

a) There needs to exist a continuum of provision from full-time attendance in a special school to support for pupils and staff in ordinary schools.
b) The school, cluster sites, and resource base form part of a service.
c) Provision should be flexible, offering the possibility of movement of pupils as their needs change.
d) The range of provision should, wherever possible, offer choice for parents and pupils.
e) Provision should include opportunities for the greatest level of integration appropriate to each pupil's needs.

## Description of Activity

The Round Oak system supports pupils with moderate learning difficulties, (MLD, I.Q 55-80).
In the core special school there are pupils statemented for MLD and often a range of other difficulties e.g. autism, epilepsy etc.

- all pupils have an Individual Education Plan so that their needs can be met;
- classes have a teacher and a special needs assistant;
- the curriculum is delivered using a thematic approach;
- pupils have access to the National Curriculum by differentiation;
- close links are made with parents;
- there is an emphasis on personal and social education.

A cluster teacher supports a cluster pupil, in a mainstream school, in a variety of ways:

- access to the curriculum;
- collaborative teaching;
- in class, in groups, individually;
- withdrawal but only if appropriate;
- preparation and differentiation of teaching material;
- supporting teachers in planning access to the curriculum;
- regular preparation and review of Individual Education Plans (IEP's);
- preparation of annual reviews of statements;
- a focus for communication for all those involved with the pupil;

- continuity and extension of pastoral support;
- support for parents.

A cluster teacher may support a cluster school in a variety of ways:
- by enhancing special needs provision in the school;
- by supporting whole school curriculum issues;
- by teaching their subject specialism;
- by working with the pastoral system.

The cluster system is supported by :
- a co-ordinator and the senior management of the school;
- regular cluster team meetings;
- regular opportunities for training;
- access to the resource base.

## Evaluation of activity

The Round Oak system has many strengths:
- Flexibility of provision for the pupil;
- Greater access to educational opportunities and facilities for the pupil;
- Increased social development for the pupil;
- Levels of support can be appropriately tailored to the needs of the individual;
- Partnership between mainstream and special schools leading to a greater understanding;
- Staff development enhanced;
- Other pupils with learning difficulties within mainstream schools also benefit.

The weaknesses of the system are:
- Cluster provision is not available in every school in the area. A significant number of pupils have to travel out of their local area to receive the provision;
- It remains difficult to ensure that a mainstream school curriculum is appropriate for cluster pupils for 100% of the time.

### Future perspectives

We hope to consolidate and extend our provision both locally and within the County of Warwickshire.
Our system will be enhanced by a peripatetic service to complete the link between mainstream schools and the cluster support service.

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## The Riverbank Project

Region: Northumberland

### Summary of Activity

The Riverbank project started with the closing of a special school for pupils aged 3 to 9 with severe and profound learning difficulties and the establishment of educational provision in three mainstream schools. The innovation continues to evolve as the three mainstream schools address the practical challenge of achieving the functional integration of pupils with such a significant range of learning difficulties, through relevant curriculum activities, whilst ensuring that individual needs are met and the quality of mainstream learning and teaching is maintained.

### History

Riverbank School was originally a school for students with severe and profound/multiple learning difficulties. Between 80 and 90 students aged 3-19

years were educated in a school building located on an old industrial site in Ashington with an annexe about 4-5 miles away in Newbiggin by the Sea. Pressure of places and poor accommodation led to the children aged 3-9 years being moved to Abbeyfields First School in 1985. The school was now on three sites, with the Headteacher of Riverbank in charge.

The intention of the Local Education Authority (L.E.A.) was to build a new Special School as soon as funding became available. The close proximity of special and mainstream at Abbeyfields, however, led to collaborative working. Parental confidence increased and so when the time came to move forward on the replacement of the Riverbank School it was decided to build on the Abbeyfields experience.

In 1988 the arrangements at Abbeyfields were "regularised", i.e. the Special Group became officially part of the school under the direction of the Headteacher of Abbeyfields. Discussions on the possibility of similar arrangements for the older students were undertaken.

In 1991 Hirst High School (13-19 years) and Seaton Hirst Middle School (9-13 years), both mainstream schools, took responsibility for the older students. The Riverbank School closed.

Essential to the success of the transition were positive attitudes and close working relationships between the L.E.A., School Governors, Teachers and Parents. Initially led by the L.E.A., the Riverbank Project demonstrates effective educational evolution.

## Aims

Our aim is to explore the possibilities of integration in terms of location (shared sites), function (curriculum), and social interaction. In our explorations we seek to establish what is possible and to evaluate this in terms of quality of experience and education for all our students.

The purpose of our integration is:

- to facilitate participation of students in their communities;
- to involve students in the social and educational life of their schools;
- to raise awareness in the community and society in which they live.

## Description of Activity

Our students experience severe learning difficulties and, in some cases, profound and multiple learning difficulties which may include severe communication disorders, severe physical handicaps, sensory impairments, severe developmental delay, severe mental handicap, some emotional and behavioural disorders, and, often, a combination of these problems.

The practice at Abbeyfields First is to work in teams. There are four special classes and nine mainstream. Teams comprise one special and two mainstream classes. Staff work together meshing the National Curriculum with Individual Education Plans. Social integration is very important and fostered through play and locational interaction.

Seaton Hirst Middle builds upon this practice. Through Individual Education Plans children with severe learning difficulties are supported to work in mainstream lessons and mainstream pupils work in the Special Needs Department. Social integration continues to have a high profile through visits, shared projects and playtimes/lunchtimes.

A modular approach to the curriculum builds on this good practice at Hirst High. Students here join mainstream lessons as appropriate. The staff work together to enable the students, via their Individual Education Plans, to access the National Curriculum. Mainstream resources and specialist subject teaching staff are available to all students as well as the expertise of "special needs" teachers. Social interaction is promoted through educational visits and during breaks and lunchtimes.

## Evaluation of the Activity

The Riverbank Project is successful. It achieves the stated aims. Integration opportunities are maximised at each stage but the balance between functional and social integration changes as students progress through the schools. Indeed the project has been favourably received by all who have come into contact with it. Students, both mainstream and special have responded positively to the project and have benefited from the opportunities integration has brought.

The most difficult students to integrate are those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These students, along with those with severe communication disorders and related behaviour problems continue to challenge us. Our strength in social interaction between mainstream and special is still not easy to implement for these groups.
In placing the staff of the old Special School in three different schools with different managements and mainstream staff, avenues of communication have changed. Maintaining links has been difficult as has the sharing of expertise across the schools.

## Future Perspectives

We plan to focus on liaison between the school staffs and foster co-operation across the phases. There has been an increasingly fertile exchange between special and mainstream groups within the schools and we plan to extend this into cross phase work.

There are no plans at present to extend the project into other special and mainstream partnerships in Northumberland although the Education Committe has reaffirmed its commitment to the further development of integrated provision when financial resources permit.

## Contact

| | | |
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| **Abbeyfields First School** | Mrs. D. Walley | **Mr. D. M. Jenkins**<br>Education Department |
| **Seaton Hirst Middle School** | Mrs. P. Gilbert | Northumberland<br>County Council |
| **Hirst High School** | Mr. R. Houlden | County Hall<br>Morpeth, Northumberland<br>Tel: 44 1670 533000 |

# Dorton House School

Region: Kent

## History

The Royal London Society for the Blind was founded in 1838 by Thomas Lucas, a merchant from Bristol. He established a School for blind boys in Bloomsbury, London. The Organisation has grown and expanded over the 158 years and at present, runs a School, a Further Education College and a Training Centre, which offers courses in Education, Training and Employment.

## Description of Activity

Dorton House is a non-maintained School for visually-impaired pupils. At present there are 130 pupils on the School roll aged 5-16 and 60 students at Dorton College of Further Education.

The Royal London Society for the Blind (RLSB), the parent body, offers a variety of Education provision, in that the needs of individual students are identified and the appropriate courses followed. There are programmes of full integration into mainstream Schools and Colleges, supported by Dorton-based tutors, as well as shared placements for specific pupils. The Resource Department resources all students.

The pupils follow the National Curriculum as laid down by the Department for Education and Employment and the School is subject to the same inspection standards (OFSTED) as are all maintained Schools in England.

The RLSB provides Family Support Services for families with pre-School an School-aged visually-impaired children, both at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London and at Dorton House School. There is an independent Assessment Centre staffed by a team of experts, who assess the needs of visually-impaired children.

- Dorton College of Further Education, accredited by Further Education Funding Council, is a specialist College for visually impaired students which is

part of a consortium consisting of three local mainstream Colleges committed to considering the educational needs of visually impaired students and their support requirements. Working together, as equal partners, the consortium seeks to enhance provision in order that visually impaired students are successfully included in mainstream provision and are given equal opportunities to gain vocational and academic qualifications relevant to their career aspirations and available employment opportunities.

## Description of Service

Students attending mainstream Schools and Colleges follow mainstream curricula receiving varying degrees of support from Dorton-based tutors.
Materials are adapted by experienced and skilled personnel at the Dorton Resource Centre.
Independent living skills are taught as well as programmes of mobility, specific communication skills, for example Information Technology, Braille and Use of Low Vision Aids.

- The RLSB offers 'open places' at Dorton House to visually-impaired pupils who need to acquire new skills or upgrade existing ones. These pupils will return to their mainstream Schools after a period of time.

- Members of RLSB teaching staff work in an advisory role with Local Education Authorities and give support to mainstream teachers.

- Teachers from Dorton House are employed by the Universities of Birmingham, Cambridge and Plymouth to write and deliver modular courses for teacher training.

### Family Support Services based at Dorton House

These services are free of charge and available on demand to parents. A family counsellor is in post and the facilities include an apartment with overnight accommodation, a toy library and reference library.

Family activities range from informal coffee mornings, family days, family training and residential weekends.

## Evaluation of Activity

The RLSB is a centre of excellence and is well known in the United Kingdom for its expertise in Visual Impairment. It provides a high quality service in education training and support into employment and demonstrates real commitment to the philosophy of interaction between the mainstream and the special system of education. The whole ethos of the provision is an ongoing 'Dialogue Centre'.

## Contact

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*"Play is childrens way of perceiving the world they have been called upon to change"*

Maxim Gorki (1868-1936)